Southern
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SIGNAL - an e-mail newsletter

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The introductory page for the Southern Ontario Library Service is www.sols.org. From that page, you can move to any other pages created by staff at the Southern Ontario Library Service, as well as to links to resources and professional information.

Note - as this is an older newsletter, some links may no longer be valid, or may refer you to a section of the site that has been updated in the interim. Please contact helpdesk@sols.org if you want more information on a specific initiative.

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1. CONSORTIA PURCHASING AGREEMENTS

SOLS negotiates charitable/consortia purchasing agreements (CPAs) on behalf of SOLS libraries. CPAs are 'economies of scale' pricing for the purchase or lease of a range of goods

and services. During the month of March, several new offers were announced through the SOLSCEO listserv, including:

New SOLS Charitable Pricing Agreement (CPA) for DELL computers for the period from April 1st to June 30th, 2004.

New Consortia Purchasing Agreements (CPAs) for Large Print Books, as well as for Videos and DVDs. The successful vendor selected for Large Print Books is S&B Books. The successful vendor for Videos/DVD's is J&S Video.

New CPA for Books-By-Mail/Interlibrary Loan Bags with the Janway Company. These are small Quick Ship Books-by-Mail/Interlibrary loan bags that are made from super heavy duty 1000 denier water repellent cordura nylon, with a YKK self-repairing zipper closure and cold crack-proof solid polyester card pocket.

A renewal of the Customer Support Agreement Plan with the vendor, Sagebrush Technologies. This CPA offers the annual plan at a discount of 10% over the pricing offered for clients that approach Sagebrush directly. Sagebrush has also reduced its plan costs by 20% over last year. The offer period is April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005. To participate in the specific SOLS program, contact Daryl Novak at 1-416-961-1669 or 1-800-387-5765, ext. 5135, or by e-mail to dnovak@sols.org

Please be advised that SOLS is also in the process of negotiating a Consortia Purchasing Agreement (CPA) for McAfee Anti-Virus Software.

Further information on Charitable/Consortia Purchasing Agreements can be found at http://www.sols.org/CPA/index.htm At that Web page, the various CPAs are organized by Product and service, as well as by Vendor. The contact person for most of the CPAs is the SOLS Purchaser, Ron Neems. Ron can be reached at 1-416-961-1669 or 1-800-387-5765 ext. 5115 or by e-mail at rneems@sols.org

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2. SOLS ANNOUNCES FRENCH HELPDESK FOR VDX USERS

SOLS is pleased to announce that effective April 1, 2004, the Clarence-Rockland Public Library will be providing French HelpDesk service to French speaking staff in libraries across southern Ontario for VDX, our interlibrary loan software.

The agreement between SOLS and Clarence-Rockland Public Library runs for one year from April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005. The demand for, and effectiveness of, the service will be reviewed at the six month point. Patricia Desrochers will be the HelpDesk person available to French clients when it comes to matters pertaining to VDX and interlibrary loan in general. She can be reached at pdesrochers@clarence-rockland.com or 1-877-252-0068 or 1-613-446-6787. Patricia will be available Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and will respond to calls and e-mails within 24 hours. Response to questions received over weekends and holidays will be delayed until the next day of business.

For service in French on other general matters, libraries are asked to contact Diane Lozanski at 1-613-260-2503 or 1-866-304-7988 or check our Web site at www.sols.org/CentredAppels/Communiquez.htm

For service in English on other matters, libraries are asked to contact the SOLS HelpDesk at 1-800-387-5765, press 4 or check our Web site at www.sols.org/helpdesk/Contact.htm

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3. SPRING TRUSTEE COUNCIL MEETINGS

The purpose of the SOLS Trustee Councils is to provide:

- A communication link between SOLS and boards regarding SOLS' services
- A forum for sharing information
- An opportunity to hear how other boards deal with similar issues
- Suggestions and support for trustee training
- To elect members to the SOLS' board according to the terms established in the by-laws

Trustee Councils meet twice a year in eight locations and all public library boards may send a representative. While all appointed trustee council representatives will receive a print mailing of the agenda, the dates of the upcoming meetings have been included below for your information. You may wish to share this information at the next library board meeting. Further information is posted at http://www.sols.org/trustee/tcmain.htm

Saturday, April 24, 2004 - TC 1 - Huron County Library (Goderich Branch), 10 am to 1 pm
Saturday, April 24, 2004 - TC 6 - Belleville Public Library, 10 am to 1 pm
Monday, April 26, 2004 - Escarpment TC - Burlington Central Library, Seminar Room, 6 pm to 9 pm
Monday, April 26, 2004 - TC 3 - Hanover Public Library, 6 pm to 9 pm
Saturday, May 1, 2004 - TC 8 - Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry County Library (Winchester Branch), noon to 3:30 pm
Saturday, May 1, 2004 - TC 5 - Ajax Public Library, 10 am to 1 pm
Wednesday, May 5, 2004 - TC 7 - Bonnechere Union Library (Eganville) – Lower level/Seniors Centre, 6 pm to 9 pm
Thursday, May 6, 2004 - TC 4 - Gravenhurst Public Library, 6 pm to 9 pm

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4. SOLS-OLBA JOINT LIBRARY BOARD ORIENTATION WORKSHOPS

Again this year, the Ontario Library Boards Association, in partnership with the Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service–North, are offering a special workshop across Ontario for new and returning library board members. The workshop, called "The Rules of Engagement: The New Governance", was first presented at the January 2004 OLA SuperConference. We believe trustees who take this training will gain new insights, and serve their libraries and communities better.

While the workshop will review legal responsibilities and board roles, the emphasis will be on building relationships in the community, strategic planning and how to create strategic agendas that reflect community values and needs. The New Governance triggers greater support for the Library in the community. Resources will include the "Library Board Orientation Kit 2004", the "OLBA Handbook" and "Trustee Tips", as well as helpful Web sites. Join us for an enjoyable mix of presentation, group discussion and exchange of ideas.

There are a number of offerings of this interactive workshop confirmed in May, as well as a two-part teleconference for those who cannot attend a workshop in person.

Saturday, May 8 - Brockville Public Library, 23 Buell Street, Brockville
Saturday, May 8 - Innisfil Public Library, Lakeshore Branch, 967 Innisfil Beach Road, Innisfil
Saturday, May 15 - London Public Library, Masonville Branch, 30 North Centre Road, London
Saturday, May 15 - Oakville Public Library, Central Branch, 20 Navy Street, Oakville
Saturday, May 15 - OLS-North Conference in Thunder Bay
Thursday, May 27 - North Bay Public Library 271 Wellington Street, North Bay
Thursday, May 27 - Pembroke Public Library, 237 Victoria Street, Pembroke
Saturday, May 29 - (en français) Clarence-Rockland Public Library - Clarence-Rockland Municipal Council Chambers, 415 rue Lemay, Clarence Creek

Friday, May 19 & Friday, May 26 - Teleconference (2-part)

More details about the training, including times, costs and location maps, will be available soon on the SOLS (http://www.sols.org/trustee/trustmain.htm) and OLBA Web sites (http://www.accessola.com/olba/). Registration will be handled through the OLA and the form will be available soon.

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5. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

a) The Rural Learning Association (RLA) is pleased to announce the continuation of a fund for Ontario rural libraries. The fund is named in honour of Sarah Rosalind Badgley, a three-year-old girl who was tragically killed in an automobile accident on 21 July 2001, and is the initiative of her parents, Susan and Kerry Badgley of Kemptville, Ontario.

A grant of up to $200 per year is available to a number of rural public libraries in Ontario, and to non-rural public libraries that serve a rural clientele. The grant can be used for a variety of purposes in aid of children's literacy initiatives, including (but not restricted to the following): Book purchases; Literacy programs (story hours, guest readers, etc.); Equipment purchases (furniture, bookshelves, computer software, etc.); Renovations to children's areas in the library; or Seed money to obtain matching grants.

This is the third year for the fund, and last year, 15 libraries received funding. More information about the fund is posted on the SOLS Web site at http://www.sols.org/fund-dev/grantapplications/sarah_badgley_literacy_fund.htm There is also a link on the "Grants and Grant Writing" section of the "Funding Development" page of the SOLS Web site. The deadline for applications is Friday, April 16, 2004.

b) RBC offers after-school grants - RBC Financial Group is inviting Canadian charities that offer after-school programs to apply for grants of up to $40,000 for the 2004-2005 school year. Charities requesting funding should offer activities such as computer instruction, sports, literacy tutoring, music and art lessons, nutrition guidance, and help with homework. RBC believes that these activities provide children with opportunities to gain an area of competence outside of academics, and ultimately benefit their self-esteem. It has committed up to $600,000 in new funding for 2004 through the RBC Foundation. The deadline for proposals is Monday, April 26. For more information, visit www.rbc.com/community/donations

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6. FIRST NATION PUBLIC LIBRARIES' 2004 SPRING GATHERING

The southern Ontario First Nation public libraries will meet this spring from April 28-30 at the Mount Mary Retreat Centre in Ancaster. The Gathering program includes a business meeting, training and development sessions, and opportunities to network formally and informally.

Refresh...Replenish...Renew...Relax are the Gathering objectives. For the full Gathering program, visit the SOLS Web site at http://www.sols.org/FirstNations/gatherings/2004/brochure.pdf

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7. TRAINING WORKSHOPS

There is still time to registration for the upcoming SOLS Training workshops. There are seven workshop topics being offered in Spring 2004:

Workshop 1: "Using books to build Community"
Workshop 2: "Developing communication strategies to raise the library's profile in your community"
Workshop 3: Part 2 of "Playing the Match Game: Connecting Readers and Books"
Workshop 4: "Getting started with Graphic Novels"
Workshop 5: "The best customer service = The best library service"
Workshop 6: "Launching your own Philosophers' Café"

And in French: Atelier 1: Toup'tilitou - Bloc 3 (Communication Jeunesse)

Information on each workshop, as well as registration forms for each, are posted at http://www.sols.org/training/workshops/index.html . SOLS also maintains a "Calendar of Events" for all of the training workshops, trustee council meetings and library committee meetings. This calendar is available on the SOLS Web site at http://www.sols.org/training/calendar.html

Please note the following three changes to the training workshop schedule.

a) A fourth location has been added for Workshop #5 entitled "The best customer service = The best library service". In addition to the workshops at Centre Hastings (Madoc) on May 12th, Augusta Township (near Brockville) on May 17th and Pembroke on May 27th, there is now a workshop being held at the Ajax Public Library on Tuesday, June 1, 2004 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

b) The Innifil location for Workshop #3 entitled "Part 2 of Playing the Match Game: Connecting Readers and Books" is now full. There is still a limited amount of space at the Kingston-Frontenac workshop.

c) The Ajax location for Workshop #1 entitled "Using books to build Community", scheduled for Tuesday, April 6, 2004, has been cancelled. The Barrie location, scheduled for Tuesday, April 20th, will proceed as planned. The Brampton location, scheduled for Tuesday, April 13th will likely proceed, but we would like to see more registrations.

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8. EXCEL CERTIFICATE

The registration form for the Summer 2004 Semester is now posted on the SOLS Web site at http://www.sols.org/excel/index.htm . The registration deadline is Monday, May 3, 2004.

In the Summer 2004 semester, we will offer the following English courses:

#1 - Introduction to Public Libraries
#4 - Information Services
#8 - Collection Development for Young Adults
#16 - Professional Development

In the Summer 2004 semester, we will offer the following French courses:

#1 - Introduction aux bibliothèques publiques
#7 - Développement des collections pour enfants
#10 - Acquisitions et publication en série

Please note that, beginning with the Summer 2004 Semester of the EXCEL Certificate Program, the tuition for each course will increase from $125.00, plus GST, to $145.00, plus GST. This increase will help to cover the increased costs of producing and providing the course to students in Ontario.

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9. SOLS SUPPORTS SUCCESSFUL ARTS OUTREACH PILOT PROJECT IN FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES

Six First Nation public libraries in southern and northern Ontario will celebrate First Nations Public Library Week 2005 by hosting a mix of arts performances and workshops in their communities. Artists from the Mariposa in the Schools (MITS) program will travel to remote First Nation communities to participate in a cross-cultural arts exchange.

Patty Lawlor, SOLS' First Nation consultant, developed the project concept in consultation with Ontario's First Nation public libraries after MITS asked for advice about working with, and reaching, remote audiences. SOLS also contributed a letter of support to the subsequent pilot project grant application developed by MITS Executive Director, Julie Stone. The Ontario Arts Council (OAC) confirmed funding support earlier this month.

MITS will administer the project and SOLS will serve as liaison between MITS and the First Nation libraries and communities. In addition to the in-community programming, the OAC grant will also fund Arts Outreach training sessions at the southern Ontario First Nation public Libraries Spring Gathering and the northern Ontario First Nation Public Libraries' conference in 2005.

For information about MITS, visit its web site at: http://www.mits.on.ca .

For more information about SOLS' involvement in this project, contact: Patty Lawlor by telephone at 1-800-387-5765, extension 5107, or e-mail at plawlor@sols.org .

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10. SOLS WEB SITE UPDATE

The SOLS Web Editor continues to maintain a section of the Web site entitled ""Librarians' Library of Links" (formerly known as the "Alphabetical Site Index"). On this page, there are a series of links to resource pages on special topics as prepared by SOLS staff. One link is to "Literature and Fiction" resources. Within that section, there are links to further resources, such as Awards, Best Seller Lists and Notables, Bibliographies & Booklists, Book Clubs, and Readers Advisory Services. A new link has been added to one of the sub-sections called "Genres". "Romance: Library Career Romances" provides examples of books, often written by librarian authors, and starring heroines who find love amidst the glamour of card catalogs, microfilm readers, and bookmobiles. The Web address for this section of the Web site is http://www.sols.org/information/LitFiction.html#Genres . If you wish to move directly to this fun list, go to http://www.jenw.org/home.htm

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11. UPDATE: Policy Requirements under the Municipal Act, 2001

Under the Municipal Act, 2001, section 270, public library boards must adopt policies with respect to the hiring of employees, including, and under section 271, policies with respect to the procurement of goods and services, before January 1, 2005.

Library boards should be aware that there are some important implications inherent in the requirements of these policies. Firstly, as a local board, you must approve the policies to put them into effect. This is usually done by passing a resolution at a duly constituted board meeting. Your policies must deal with the minimum list of subjects outlined in the legislation. This may mean that some current procedures may need to form part of the policies.

Staff who are most familiar with purchasing or personnel, as the case may be, and who understand policy development, should develop these policies. Lastly, the policies should be developed in enough time to educate municipal/local board staff, to inform suppliers and others of changes and to allow for consultation with stakeholders, if needed.

Hiring Policies

The policies with respect to hiring of employees must deal, at minimum, with the hiring of relatives of library board members and existing employees of the library board. The policies should support the general principles of fairness, transparency, selection of the best candidate, selection by the CEO and/or the immediate supervisor of the potential employee, and avoidance of real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Goods and Services Policies

The policies with respect to the procurement of goods and services must include policies with respect to:

the types of procurement processes that shall be used;
the goals to be achieved by using each type of procurement process;
the circumstances under which each type of procurement process shall be used;
the circumstances under which a tendering process is not required;
the circumstances under which in-house bids will be encouraged as part of a tendering process;
how the integrity of each procurement process will be maintained;
how the interests of the municipality or local board, as the case may be, the public and persons participating in a procurement process will be protected;
how and when the procurement processes will be reviewed to evaluate their effectiveness.

A summary of the requirements for these two policies, as well as a list of available resources, is posted at
http://www.sols.org/links/clearinghouse/legislation/resources/municipalact2001/index.htm

SOLS help for policies required under the Municipal Act - By June 30, 2004, SOLS will review all of the key resources, summarize and extract relevant sections, draft sample policies covering all required elements and distribute these items to all public library boards in southern Ontario. While waiting for these resources, library CEOs and boards should consider reviewing existing procurement policies and those of your municipality. It may also be advisable, after determining how the municipality will be proceeding, to consider whether the policies being developed by the municipality would suit the library situation or whether library-specific policies are required. Again, this information will be posted at
http://www.sols.org/links/clearinghouse/legislation/resources/municipalact2001/index.htm

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12. UPDATE: Annual Survey 2003

This message was also sent out to SOLS CEOs via the listserv in mid-March.

It is the goal of the Ministry to distribute the 2003 Annual Survey form in early April. It will not have changed in any significant way from the 2002 Annual Survey. The deadline for submission of the 2003 Annual Survey of Public Libraries will be approximately six weeks from the date that it is distributed.

E-filing will be an option again this year. Last year, 219 libraries e-filed their surveys.

The Ministry also has a goal of producing the Ontario Public Library 2002 Statistics in March/April 2004. In order to meet this goal, they may need to contact some libraries to clarify

some information on the Annual Survey.

For your information, SOLS staff will, once again, be the contact point for questions regarding the completion of the survey. Contact Bill Mitchell at 1-800-267-2758, ext. 829 or write . First Nations libraries can contact Patty Lawlor at 1-800-387-5765, ext. 5107 or write to her at plawlor@sols.org

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13. UPDATE: ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY GUIDELINES, 3RD EDITION

This past year, six libraries in Ontario were audited by Accreditation audit teams and met the conditions for accreditation as set down by the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council.

During the month of March 2004, the third edition of the Ontario Public Library (OPL) Guidelines was distributed from the SOLS-Toronto office to each public library in southern Ontario. A PDF version of the publication has also been posted on the OLS-North Web site at (http://www.olsn.ca/english/home-eng2.html) . To get this document, from the main OLS-N page, select the link for "Libraries North", then "Policy and Planning Platform", then scroll down to the "Best Practices" heading. The Second edition of the OPL Guidelines has now been withdrawn.

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14. SOLS BOARD SUMMARY - March 2004

Ends Policy Development

The Board continued work on Ends policies for SOLS. Ends policies must answer three questions: What good? For which people? At what cost?

Since June, the Board has completed visioning and SWOT exercises. The Board has also grappled with writing a benefits statement and at the March meeting, the Board revised the statement and established priorities. Currently, the draft benefits statement (in priority order) is:

Mission: SOLS exists so that there is a strong system of effective and efficient public libraries.

A strong system of effective and efficient public libraries is further interpreted to include:

1) Libraries collaborate to make the most effective use of resources, including:

a) Libraries are connected together in a network of information resources that is accessible to all Ontarians.
b) Libraries pool financial resources in the acquisition of goods and services.
c) Libraries share information and expertise.

2) Libraries have the information and guidance they need to meet future challenges and opportunities.

3) Libraries are able to meet the Ontario Public Library Guidelines for Accreditation including:

a) Library staff have the skills, information and guidance they need to operate the library effectively.
b) Library trustees have the skills, information and guidance they need to govern effectively.

4) Stakeholders are kept informed of the value of libraries.

The next step now rests with the Strategic Planning work team. This team, comprising some Board members, as well as SOLS' Management Team, will use the above draft statement to develop a new plan for SOLS' services. The work of the team will include further development of the statements, as well as strategies and action plans for implementing them. While a specific process has not yet been established, there will also be a consultation stage with our clients.

Assurance of Funding - One of the four jobs of the Board is assurance of funding through advocating the provincial government for optimal funding, and pursuing a variety of funding and resource development activities that support SOLS' Ends priorities.

The Board has launched a program to visit all MPPs whose ridings overlap SOLS' service area, as well as most Cabinet Ministers. A total of 77 visits are planned and nineteen visits have been completed to date.

At the December meeting, the Board explored SOLS' potential for resource advancement, the techniques that are effective for an organization of this type, and the roles Board members themselves can play. The Board discussed the potential for individual donations, how to cultivate potential donors, and what would be a reasonable fundraising target for the next fiscal year.

At the March meeting, the Board established a Fundraising Planning Committee. The Committee's role is to develop an action plan with a goal of raising $30,000 for SOLS' 2005/06 budget through individual donations. The action plan will be submitted for Board consideration at the next meeting.

Budget Projections - SOLS is projecting a budget shortfall of $200,000 (approximately 5% of our operating budget) in each of the next two fiscal years: 2004/05 and 2005/06. The biggest single factor is the reinstatement of OMERS contributions (at a much faster rate than originally announced and increased to 122% of former levels). Additional factors include increasing costs for office space, for benefits, and for most goods and services with no increase in funding. In developing alternatives for addressing this pressure, we are planning cuts to administration, staff and finally services in that order of priority. At this stage, our plans include:

Closing the Ottawa office effective February 29, 2004 and relocating the staff to home offices.

Downsizing the Toronto office upon the expiry of the current lease in November 2004.

Reducing a number of administrative costs including canceling cell phones (as of December 2003) and revising the structure of board meetings to reduce accommodation and travel expenses (effective March 2004).

Implementing voluntary reduced time for interested staff (effective April 1, 2004).

Increasing fees for EXCEL and workshops (effective April 1, 2004).

Restructuring our service delivery in Library Development and revising our fee structure for consulting services (effective April 1, 2004).

Reducing the frequency of the delivery service (effective September 2004).

Policy Review - A regularly scheduled job of the Board is to review its policies. This meeting focused on Board/CEO Relationship. Board policies may be found at http://www.sols.org/solsaboutus.html (click on Board Policies).

Board Resignations - Lynn Campbell, Beverley Rix and George Deshpande regretfully tendered their resignations on SOLS' Board. Between work commitments and health issues, these members have had to pull back on their volunteer commitments. Their contributions will be missed.

Trustee Council Elections - With the resignations noted above, there are three vacancies on SOLS' Board for the one remaining year of the Board's term. Elections will be held at the Escarpment Trustee Council, Trustee Council 7 (Renfrew) and Trustee Council 8 (Ottawa area) at the upcoming meetings. Information regarding eligibility for the Board, the role of SOLS' Board members and the characteristics being sought in Board members are all included in a package being distributed with the next agenda for these three councils.

Board Meeting Schedule for 2004

The board approved the following schedule of meetings for the next year:

June 5, 2004
September 11, 2004
December 4, 2004
March 5, 2005

Operational Plan Quarterly Update

An update on various operational items on SOLS' services is available on SOLS' Web site at www.sols.org . From the left navigation bar on the main page, select "About us", then select "Corporate documents" or move directly to http://www.sols.org/publications/corporate/list.html

Next Board Meeting

The next meeting of SOLS' Board is scheduled for Saturday, June 5, 2004 at 151 Bloor St. West, 5th Floor, Ontario Arts Council Boardroom.

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15. AND FINALLY....

a) AFP GREATER TORONTO CHAPTER'S OUT' ANDING NEW FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONAL FOR 2004

Ann Andrusyszyn, Development Officer at Barrie Public Library, was honoured today at the Association of Fundraising Professionals Greater Toronto Chapter's Annual Meeting as the recipient of this year's Outstanding New Fundraising Professional award.

This annual award recognizes early-career fundraising professionals who have displayed exceptional talent and demonstrated outstanding achievement. It is intended that this award will encourage continuing extraordinary performance by the winner, as she works toward accreditation, adheres to high standards in professional practice, and exemplifies a commitment to the voluntary sector in her community. The press release on this award, as well as some photographs are posted on the Funding Development section of the Web site at http://www.sols.org/fund-dev/FD/FDmain.htm

b) NEW TEEN SERVICES LISTSERV

OPLA's Child and Youth Services Task Force is delighted to announce that there is now an OLA listserv especially for library staff serving teens. The new listserv will be a place to discuss youth literature, program ideas, teen advisory groups, and all other aspects of service to youth in public libraries. To join the listserv, send an e-mail to Trevor Balla at tballa@accessola.com .

Postings to OPLA's Youth listserv can be e-mailed to youth-l@accessola.com . The former "childyouth-l" listserv will now be dedicated to children's services, and its email address has changed to child-l@accessola.com . Anyone already on the "childyouth-l" mailing list will be automatically added to the "child-l" list.

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All issues of SIGNAL, including the French version of SIGNAL, can be viewed online at signal@sols.org . However, if anyone would like to receive the e-mail version of this newsletter, please send a message to signal@sols.org. You can reach the editor of SIGNAL at: signal@sols.org or by telephone at 1-866-380-9767.

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